

CLAIMS

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1 1. A method for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
3 receiving a request for the preferred
4 category of seating;
5 determining if the preferred category
6 of seating is available;
7 providing notification that the
8 preferred category of seating is available;
9 guaranteeing the preferred category
10 of seating;
11 assigning a passenger to a "flexible"
12 seat assignment within the guaranteed category of
13 seating;
14 reassigning the passenger to a
15 different "flexible" seat assignment within the
16 guaranteed category of seating based on another
17 request; and
18 converting the "flexible" seat
19 assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment.

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3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating based on another request.

1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein guaranteeing the
2 at least one preferred category of seating comprises
3 reassigning at least one passenger within the at least one
4 passenger's at least one guaranteed category of seating.

1 9. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is
2 received when an airline reservation is being made.

1 10. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is
2 received after an airline reservation is made and prior to a
3 check-in process.

1 11. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is
2 received during the check-in process.

1 12. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is
2 received when a passenger inquires about a flight reservation.

1 13. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a window seat.

1 14. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is an aisle seat.

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1 15. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a bulkhead seat.

1 16. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is an emergency exit row seat.

1 17. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a seat adjacent to a certain passenger.

1 18. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a seat away from a type of passenger.

1 19. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a seat in a particular section.

1 20. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred
2 category of seating is a seat in a particular row.

1 21. The method of claim 2, further comprising
2 defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating
3 allowable within the request.

1 22. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
2 converting the "flexible" seat
3 assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment; and
4 prohibiting reallocation of the
5 permanent seat assignment.

1 23. The method of claim 22, wherein converting the
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs
3 for all passengers simultaneously.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein converting the
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs
3 when check-in begins.

1 25. The method of claim 23, wherein converting the
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs
3 when boarding initiates.

1 26. The method of claim 22, wherein converting the
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs
3 as the passenger inserts a boarding pass into a boarding pass
4 reader.

1 27. A method for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

3 receiving a request for multiple
4 preferred categories of seating;

5 determining which of the multiple
6 preferred categories of seating are available; and

7 guaranteeing at least one preferred
8 category of seating.

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1 28. The method of claim 27, further comprising
2 providing notification that at least one of the preferred
3 categories of seating is available.

1 29. The method of claim 28, further comprising
2 receiving an indication that at least one of the available
3 preferred categories of seating is acceptable.

1 30. The method of claim 27, further comprising
2 defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating
3 allowable within the request.

1 31. The method of claim 27, wherein the request is
2 received from a travel agent.

1 32. The method of claim 27, wherein the request is
2 received from a passenger.

1 33. The method of claim 27, further comprising
2 assigning a passenger to a "flexible" seat assignment within
3 the at least one guaranteed category of seating.

1 34. The method of claim 33, further comprising
2 reassigning the passenger to a different "flexible" seat
3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating based on another request.

1 35. The method of claim 27, wherein guaranteeing at
2 least one preferred category of seating comprises reassigning
3 at least one passenger within the at least one passenger's at
4 least one guaranteed category of seating.

1 36. The method of claim 33, further comprising:
2 converting the "flexible" seat
3 assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment; and
4 prohibiting reallocation of the
5 permanent seat assignment.

1 37. A method for requesting an airline reservation
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
3 transmitting a request for at least
4 one preferred category of seating; and
5 receiving notification guaranteeing
6 the at least one preferred category of seating.

1 38. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
3 means for receiving a request for the
4 preferred category of seating;
5 means for determining if the
6 preferred category of seating is available;

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7 means for providing notification that
8 the preferred category of seating is available;

9 means for guaranteeing the preferred
10 category of seating;

11 means for assigning a passenger to a
12 "flexible" seat assignment within the guaranteed
13 category of seating;

14 means for reassigning the passenger
15 to a different "flexible" seat assignment within the
16 guaranteed category of seating based on another
17 request; and

18 means for converting the "flexible"
19 seat assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment.

1 39. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

3 means for receiving a request for at
4 least one preferred category of seating;

5 means for determining if the at least
6 one preferred category of seating is available; and

7 means for guaranteeing the at least
8 one preferred category of seating.

1 40. The system of claim 39, further comprising
2 means for providing notification that the at least one
3 preferred category of seating is available.

1 41. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is
2 received from a travel agent.

1 42. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is
2 received from a passenger.

1 43. The system of claim 39, further comprising
2 means for assigning the passenger to a "flexible" seat
3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating.

1 44. The system of claim 43, further comprising
2 means for reassigning the passenger to a different "flexible"
3 seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating based on another request.

1 45. The system of claim 39, wherein means for
2 guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating
3 comprises means for reassigning at least one passenger within
4 the at least one passenger's at least one guaranteed category
5 of seating.

1 53. The system of claim 51, wherein means for
2 converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat
3 assignment occurs when check-in begins.

1 54. The system of claim 51, wherein means for
2 converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat
3 assignment occurs when boarding initiates.

1 55. The system of claim 51, wherein means for
2 converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat
3 assignment occurs as the passenger inserts a boarding pass
4 into a boarding pass reader.

1 56. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

3 means for receiving a request for
4 multiple preferred categories of seating;

5 means for determining which of the
6 multiple preferred categories of seating are
7 available; and

8 means for guaranteeing at least one
9 preferred category of seating.

1 57. The system of claim 56, further comprising
2 means for providing notification that at least one of the
3 preferred categories of seating is available.

1 58. The system of claim 57, further comprising
2 means for receiving an indication that at least one of the
3 available preferred categories of seating is acceptable.

1 59. The system of claim 56, further comprising
2 means for defining a maximum number of preferred categories of
3 seating allowable within the request.

1 60. The system of claim 56, further comprising
2 means for assigning a passenger to a "flexible" seat
3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating.

1 61. The system of claim 60, further comprising
2 means for reassigning the passenger to a different "flexible"
3 seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of
4 seating based on another request.

1 62. The system of claim 56, wherein means for
2 guaranteeing at least one preferred category of seating
3 comprises means for reassigning at least one passenger within

4 the at least one passenger's at least one guaranteed category
5 of seating.

1 63. The system of claim 60, further comprising:
2 means for converting the "flexible"
3 seat assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment;
4 and
5 means for prohibiting reallocation of
6 the permanent seat assignment.

1 64. A system for requesting an airline reservation
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
3 means for transmitting a request for
4 at least one preferred category of seating; and
5 means for receiving notification
6 guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of
7 seating.

1 65. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:
3 a storage device storing a program;
4 a processor in communication with the
5 storage device, the processor operative with the
6 program to:

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7 receive a request for at least one
8 preferred category of seating;
9 determine if the at least one
10 preferred category of seating is available;
11 guarantee the at least one preferred
12 category of seating.

1 67. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:
3 a storage device storing a program;
4 a processor in communication with the
5 storage device, the processor operative with the
6 program to:
7 receive a request for multiple
8 preferred categories of seating;
9 determine which of the multiple
10 preferred categories of seating are available; and
11 guarantee at least one preferred
12 category of seating.

1 68. A system for processing airline reservations
2 for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:
3 a storage device storing a program;

4 a processor in communication with the
5 storage device, the processor operative with the
6 program to:

7 transmit a request for at least one
8 preferred category of seating; and

9 receive notification guaranteeing the
10 at least one preferred category of seating.

1 69. An article of manufacture for causing a
2 computer to process airline reservations for a preferred
3 category of seating, comprising:

4 means for causing the computer to
5 receive a request for the preferred category of
6 seating;

7 means for causing the computer to
8 determine if the preferred category of seating is
9 available;

10 means for causing the computer to
11 provide notification that the preferred category of
12 seating is available;

13 means for causing the computer to
14 guarantee the preferred category of seating;

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1 71. An article of manufacture for causing a
2 computer to process airline reservations for a preferred
3 category of seating, comprising:

4 means for causing the computer to
5 receive a request for multiple preferred categories
6 of seating;

7 means for causing the computer to
8 determine which of the multiple preferred categories
9 of seating are available; and

10 means for causing the computer to
11 guarantee at least one preferred category of
12 seating.

1 72. A method for processing reservations for a
2 preferred category of service, comprising:

3 receiving a request for the preferred
4 category of service;

5 determining if the preferred category
6 of service is available;

7 guaranteeing the preferred category
8 of service;

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9 assigning an individual to a
10 "flexible" assignment within the guaranteed category
11 of service;
12 converting the "flexible" assignment
13 to a "permanent" assignment; and
14 prohibiting the reallocation of the
15 permanent assignment.

1 73. The method of claim 72, further comprising
2 providing notification that the preferred category of service
3 is available.

1 74. The method of claim 72, further comprising
2 reassigning the individual to a different "flexible"
3 assignment within the guaranteed category of service based on
4 another request.

1 75. The method of claim 72, wherein converting the
2 flexible assignment to a permanent assignment occurs for all
3 individuals simultaneously.

1 76. The method of claim 72, further comprising
2 defining a time when the flexible assignment is converted to a
3 permanent assignment.

1 77. The method of claim 72, wherein the preferred
2 category of service is for seating.

1 78. The method of claim 72, wherein the preferred
2 category of service is for a hotel.

1 79. The method of claim 77, wherein the seating is
2 for a vehicle of transportation.

1 80. The method of claim 77, wherein the seating is
2 for a stadium.

1 81. The method of claim 77 wherein the seating is
2 for a theatre.

1 82. The method of claim 77 wherein the seating is
2 for an arena.

1 83. A method wherein reservations for a preferred
2 category of service are finalized based on a transition point,
3 the method comprising:

4 assigning an individual to a
5 "flexible" assignment within the preferred category
6 of service; and

7 converting the flexible assignment to
8 a permanent assignment at the transition point.

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9 84. The method of claim 83, further comprising
10 prohibiting the reallocation of the permanent assignment.

11 85. The method of claim 83, wherein the transition
12 point is collective and the conversion from a flexible
13 assignment to a permanent assignment occurs for all
14 individuals simultaneously.

15 86. The method of claim 83, further comprising
16 defining a time when the flexible assignment is converted to a
17 permanent assignment.

1 87. The method of claim 83, wherein the preferred
2 category of service is for seating.

1 88. The method of claim 83, wherein the preferred
2 category of service is for a hotel.

1 89. The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is
2 for a vehicle of transportation.

1 90. The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is
2 for a stadium.

1 91. The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is
2 for a theatre.

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